

CFM CAREER MANAGEMENT: CM.6–CM.8

Making Ethical Leadership Decisions at Work

Detailed practice, calculation, decision-making, and assessment

GRADES 9-12	TIME 2 x 42 min	GROUPING I / pairs / whole	PRODUCT Decision
YOUR CHALLENGE Use a structured decision process to respond to conflicts involving accuracy, privacy, fairness, pressure, and accountability.			

New York CFM Connections: Lifelong Learning, Leadership and Ethics, and Business Communications

Ethical leadership is not limited to supervisors. Students demonstrate it when they identify affected people, separate facts from assumptions, apply workplace expectations, consider consequences, speak up appropriately, and accept responsibility. Ethical decisions should be documented without exposing private information.

Term	Student-friendly meaning
Ethics	Principles used to judge responsible conduct.
Stakeholder	A person or group affected by a decision.
Conflict of interest	A personal interest that could improperly influence a work decision.
Confidentiality	Responsibility to protect information from unauthorized disclosure.
Accountability	Accepting responsibility for actions and results.
Escalation	Bringing a concern to a person or channel with greater authority.
CLASSROOM USE All people, employers, figures, brackets, and documents in this packet are fictional. Never place a real Social Security number, employer ID, bank number, or tax document in classroom work.	

Part 1 - Separate Facts, Assumptions, and Pressures

A student intern notices that a teammate changed three inspection results so an order would ship on time. The teammate says the differences are “too small to matter.”

Statement	Fact, claim, or missing information?	Why	How to verify safely
Results were changed			
Changes are too small to matter			
Shipment is due today			
Supervisor approved changes			
Customer would not be affected			
Original records still exist			

Do not accuse beyond the known facts or alter records while investigating.

Part 2 - Map Stakeholders and Responsibilities

Identify who may be affected and what each needs.

Stakeholder	Possible impact	Responsibility/interest	Information to protect
Customer			
Coworker			
Supervisor			
Organization			
Student intern			
Public/regulator if applicable			

Consequences can include safety, trust, quality, fairness, and legal or financial harm.

Part 3 - Evaluate Response Options

Compare ignoring it, confronting publicly, asking privately, reporting through procedure, and changing the records back without authorization.

Option	Possible benefit	Risk/harm	Policy/evidence question	Ethical rating
Ignore				
Public confrontation				
Private clarification				
Procedural report				
Unauthorized correction				

A strong option protects evidence, people, and due process.

Part 4 - Draft an Ethical Escalation Message

Write an objective message to the appropriate supervisor.

Message element	Professional wording
Observed facts	
Records involved	
Immediate risk/question	
Action already taken	
Requested guidance	
Confidentiality statement	

Avoid motive claims, threats, gossip, and unnecessary personal information.

Part 5 - Write an Ethical Leadership Recommendation

Use a six-step process: define, verify, identify stakeholders, evaluate options, act, and review.

Decision check	Evidence
Ethical issue	
Known facts	
Missing facts	
Stakeholders	
Best action	
Why alternatives rejected	
Documentation	
Follow-up/review	

Write 150–200 words. Explain how integrity and accountability are shown.
